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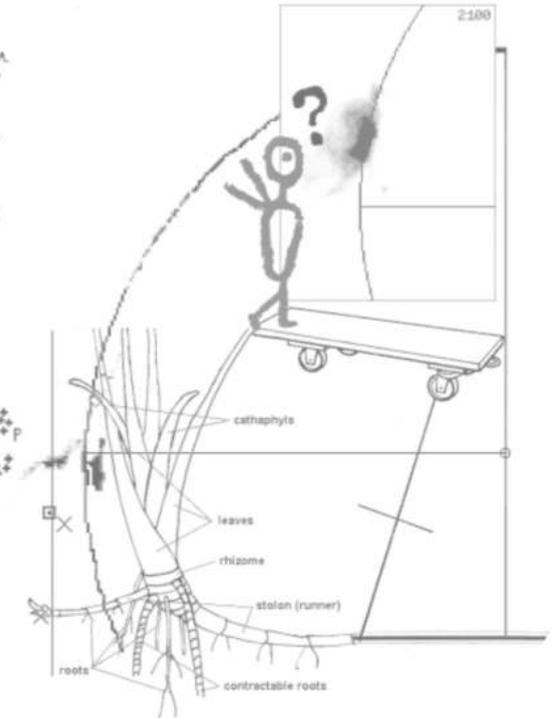
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chapter 01



We all carry deep-seated cultural baggage, which affects our mindset, thinking, scale of values and the way we structure our worlds. Architecture, as part of the urban text, represents our worldviews, beliefs, values and assumptions, and thus influences how we interact with our surroundings.

EXPERIENCE





# 1. 1\_ INTRODUCTION

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Culture is what makes a place and its people distinctive and unique, and how that place is etched into people's minds and imaginations. "Culture accounts for the symbolic forms via which people codify, understand and negotiate their everyday lived experience" (Van Eeden & du Preez 2005: 224).

Essentially, it is about the values and experience of a place, and the range of stimuli that the urban fabric provides on different layers and levels of activity.

The way that societies in the past planned for public culture and amenities offers us some insight into the paradigms of the continuity and change of cities. From ancient Athens, Rome and the Byzantine Empire, to the European Renaissance and today, the arts have always played an important role in creating a vibrant civic culture.

But the traditional role of cultural buildings is changing. Monuments and museums were once seen as important objects. Today, however, they are places that host a much wider range of activities. They are perceived as places for entertainment, interaction and the event.

The current rate of development of cultural facilities, especially in post-industrial cities, parallels the urban renaissance in Europe between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. They play an important role in the regeneration of both western and non-western cities. They are closely linked with tourism and the economic growth of cities. "No one can say for certain if it's the 'cultural embedded in the economic' or vice versa, but what is clear is that culture and economic growth in cities are closely linked" (Evans 2001: 135).

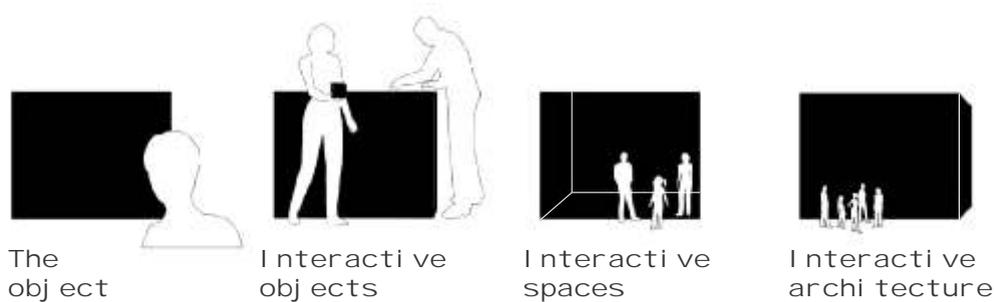
"However, the new 'Grand Projects' and cultural resources are highly concentrated, at the cost of both local amenities and a culturally diverse society" (Evans 2001: preword). Size and image increasingly matter in most new high profile cultural projects. As Graeme Evans, former Director of the London Association of Arts Centres mentions: "Bilbao babies are born everywhere" (Evans 2001: 217).

"Bilbao looks great now, but in 30 years will it prove less flexible?" (Evans 2001: 248).



# 1. 2\_PROBLEM STATEMENT

A mixture of cultures and worldviews can be found in African cities, which are constantly being created, contested, negotiated and recreated. Today, architecture needs to respond to these ever changing conditions. We need to design environments that cover place, space, time and interaction.



In our technologically driven societies the computer is increasingly being viewed as a new medium of representation that is interactive, multi-dimensional, connective and generative. Until recently buildings were viewed as free-standing art objects in the landscape, or as 'decorated sheds'. But with the introduction of digital technologies in our environment this new medium calls for a new form of interactive architecture.

The building envelope is traditionally seen as a static and two-dimensional element in the building's composition.

But a façade is not a mask behind which the building hides; it is the mediated surface between the building and the city. It is the face that communicates the building's functions to us, that activates the public spaces within our cities and that represents the way we view the world.

Architecture must function as an extended form of skin. An adaptable envelope that communicates with us and remains flexible throughout its lifecycle.

fig 1.3 (above) The four modes of representation.



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This project did not start with an image or form, or even a formal strategy. This project started from the urban context and the program; the object and the ground. Hidden potentialities were uncovered and a concept, which is closely related to the site and the program, was identified. Eventually a form was developed through the process, which reinforced the qualities of the concept.

But, design “cannot be too 'innocent'”. Although not the starting point for a project, the project was informed by theoretical issues and made connections with important ideas of our time.

“Architecture is seen as the materialization of concepts, as opposed to the materialization of form” (Tschumi 2000:11)

\_Adapted from Tschumi in Event Cities 2 (2000: 11)



# 1. 3\_THE PROGRAM

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In order to reinforce Tshwane's new post-apartheid identity there is a need for fewer high-profile, monumental cultural projects. These buildings should not be idealized monuments or icons but **street-sensitive, accessible buildings** that reflect their dynamic urban settings.

"Cultural facilities and activities are significant factors in generating inspiration, self-confidence, debate or ideas exchange as well as the creation of a city's image ... Consuming high-profile arts and cultural activities has less strong transformative effects on individuals than direct participation, whose impact is greater in terms of human development and tapping creative potential" (Landry 2000: 123).

Cultural quarters consist of creative clusters. They are dependent on informal networks, as well as face-to-face contact. They require flexible and accessible environments. Creative industries businesses that operate within these environments mediate between multiple areas; between the

formal and informal; the lifestyle-orientated and profit-driven; the local and non-local; the public and private.

The task of the creative intermediary is to make sense of these processes, identify opportunities and offer support, and encourage the different players. The creative intermediary operates as a gatekeeper, initiator, supporter, mediator and source of information.

Creative intermediary organizations are mainly public-sector funded. They need to mediate between the top-down sector and the bottom-up environment.

The **proposed design** will play the role of a creative intermediary. Its aim is to develop a synthesis between the arts, culture, economy and urban vitality by creating a platform for artists, as well as providing resources and facilities for training, recruitment, financial support and promotion. It will provide spaces for presentations, exhibitions, informal gatherings, internships and residencies for contemporary artists.



The following is to be accommodated in the centre:

- \_large gatherings and performances
- \_workshops
- \_gallery (artist run and commercial)
- \_archives and computer workroom
- \_screening room
- \_studio space
- \_facilities for informal traders
- \_café and restaurants
- \_offices
- \_rentable office space for industry professionals
- \_student housing
- \_tram stop and ticket sale booth
- \_public amenities

It is a mixed-use building in which 24 hour activities are promoted.

- public 
- semi-public 
- private 
- services 

### morn i ng

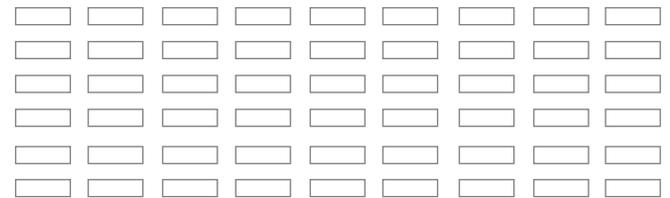
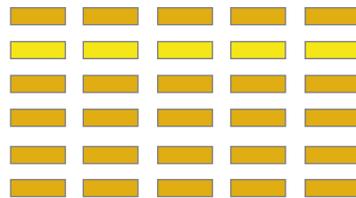
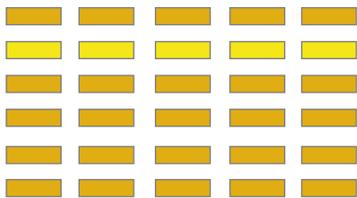
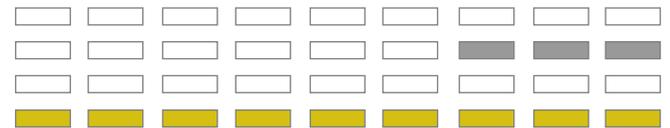
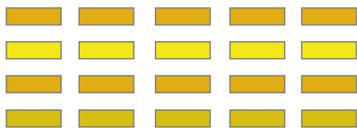
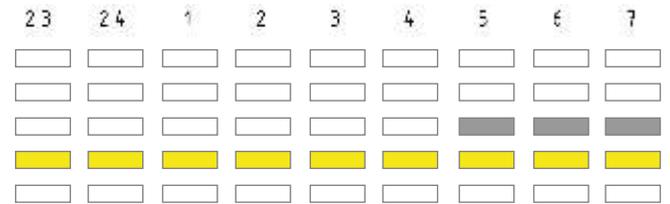
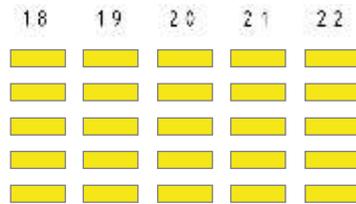
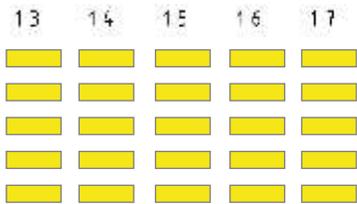
	8	9	10	11	12
main foyer					
digital gallery					
cafe					
public restrooms					
tram stop					
basement parking					
private entrance					
restaurants & fast-food outlets					
offices					
residential					
semi-private entrance					
workshop area					
multi-media room					
archives					
conference rooms					
studio space					



afternoon

eveni ng

ni ght







# 1. 4 \_THE USER

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To describe the user the French term *animation socio-culturel* is applicable. The term is used widely to describe the work of a community artist who uses the **material of everyday life**.

The *animateur's* role is central. It is the community artist that animates and gives life to a community. They help celebrate and give a voice to the local cultures that shape and bind a community, by living and working in the mainstream of the community life. The *animateur* acts as a catalyst and an organizer of work. He or she imparts with their skills, channeling their creative energy to the community.

The *animateur* can be anyone. It is the person who takes an active role in building the dynamic culture. People are no longer consigned to only consume art, professional opinions and aspirations. The *animateur* is not admired from a distance, but is someone who finds expression and meaning in working with others. The product is the animation of an ongoing art event; part of everyday community life with the city forming the stage.

fig 1. 4 Collage: the *animateur*.







# 1.5 THE CLIENT

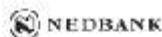
The Department of Arts and Culture [DAC] is tasked to create an environment conducive to the growth, development and flowering of South Africa's arts, culture and heritage landscape. Among its key objectives are the improvement, re-orientation and expansion of the arts and culture sector to serve South Africa's cultural needs.

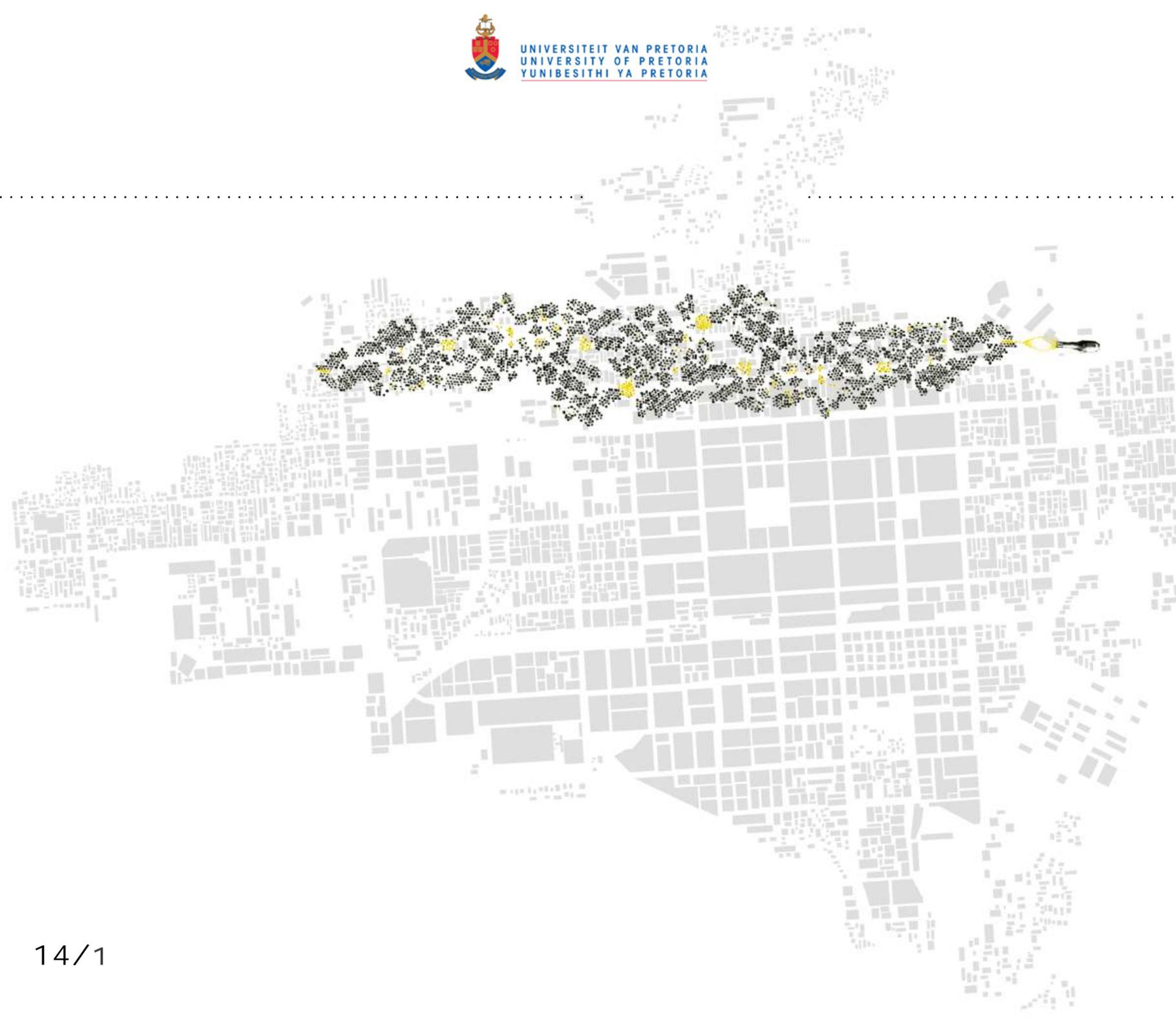
Procurement: The Department of Arts and Culture, The Royal Netherlands Embassy; Nedbank; Sun International and The Vodacom Foundation are the Founding Trustees of the Arts and Culture Trust (ACT). It functions as a partnership between the private sector, the government and the local community.

The ACT was endorsed by former President Nelson Mandela. It is the oldest body that was established to fund arts and culture in democratic South Africa. It has supported over 500 projects with funding to the total value of R11 million since 1996.

The Arts & Culture Trust funds projects across the spectrum in arts, culture and heritage. The trust focuses on areas of development which include job creation, creative skills, management skills, cultural diversity and cultural tourism marketing. Projects that are currently funded are in the fields of theatre, music, dance, literature, heritage, arts administration, community arts, visual arts, arts education and multi-disciplinary projects.

Management: the project is to be managed by a board of representatives.







# 1.6 SITE REQUIREMENTS

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The physical location of the project is extremely important because it has to act as a catalyst for further change in the northern part of Pretoria's CBD, which is in dire need of regeneration. The site forms part of the larger urban framework for Pretoria and is to become the cultural hub of Pretoria.

The site was identified according to the following criteria:

- The site must be located in an area in need of urban regeneration
- In order to convey the image of the city as a culturally perceptive city to its urban population and visitors, the site must be located at a visual node, i.e. gateway into the Pretoria CBD.
- The site must be in close proximity to large public transportation nodes in order to give the site easy public access and connect it to the larger urban network.
- It is important that this project must form part of the established art infrastructure in the city, i.e. a network. This project has to act as a translator between the language of the formal world of arts granting and administration, and the community of practitioners.



This project forms part of a group framework, compiled by the study group of 2007. Throughout the study year we had the opportunity to work in conjunction with other students. Our designs affected and responded to each other, strengthening the design in this way.

This project shares the site with M. Jooste; who designed the MTV Production Studios in '*Can you see the music?*' and R. Osman; who designed the '*Digital Awareness Centre*'. Together these will form the new cultural hub of Pretoria.